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SUBJECT: AEC CHAIRMAN REQUESTS U.S. ASSISTANCE WITH STAFFING FOR  
JUBA OFFICE

REFS: A) KHARTOUM 258, B) KHARTOUM 352

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Steering Committee of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) met March 16 to review a draft outline for the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the CPA. The MTE is due to be delivered to the Sudanese Presidency by July 9, requiring a robust series of meetings by the AEC's four working groups. At the meeting, the SPLM was represented by a low-ranking member who was not authorized to engage in substantive discussions. Prior to the meeting, AEC Chairman Ambassador Plumbly informed us of his letter to A/S Frazer requesting that the U.S. provide a senior staffer to head up the AEC's office in Juba. END SUMMARY

AEC REQUESTS AMERICAN TO HEAD JUBA OFFICE  
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¶2. (U) Prior to the meeting, Sir Derek huddled with U.S. Embassy reps to discuss his intended letter to AF A/S Frazer. We received a copy of the letter later in the day, which Plumbly emailed directly to A/S Frazer, in which he thanks the USG for its material support to the AEC, and then requests that the Department provide an officer to head the AEC office in Juba. Plumbly envisions a first secretary Foreign Service Officer, though we informed him that a contractor would be more likely (given the difficulty of assigning an FSO) if this proposal is accepted. (Comment: The proposal has merit as it would help the AEC to engage with the SPLM, which has had difficulty focusing on the AEC. End comment.)

YET AGAIN: WHERE'S THE SPLM?  
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¶3. (U) The March 15 Steering Committee meeting was led by Chairman (Amb. Derek Plumbly), the Vice Chairman (Kenyan Ambassador Robert Ngesu), the four working group coordinators, and the two CPA parties. The meeting was delayed half an hour as other delegates waited for the SPLM representative to arrive. The representative turned out to be Khalid Mohamed A. Jadain, head of the SPLM Caucus in the Khartoum State Legislative Council, who had to be summoned from his Khartoum hospital bed where Q+QMFQ CPA envoy. Plumbly said the delegation underscores the AU's renewed commitment to the CPA process.

DRAFT OUTLINE FOR MTE  
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¶6. (U) Most of the meeting was spent reviewing a draft outline for the MTE; members stressed that the MTE should cover successes as well as shortcomings. Plumbly said the Steering Committee would meet again soon with the participation of SPLM Minister Kosti Manibe to approve the draft.

OTHER ITEMS  
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¶7. (U) Among other news from the March 16 meeting:

-- Plumbly said he is still working on recruiting a "primary

drafter" to write the MTE. He said he has received an offer from Canada to fill one of the positions on the AEC staff.

-- The UK Ambassador reported that the Security Working Group completed its field trip to the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) in the South.

-- The Italian Ambassador noted that the Power Sharing WG expects to hold an event in Juba by the end of March related to the national census.

18. (SBU) COMMENT: As WSWG Coordinator, post will begin work on a

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first draft of its section of the midterm evaluation, with final language to be approved by consensus between the two parties before it goes to the AEC Secretariat's primary drafter. We will continue to urge the SPLM to devote more support and attention to the process.

19. (SBU) COMMENT CONT: If SPG can fund it, the request for US staffing of the AEC office in Juba deserves consideration. This would enable the AEC to communicate more regularly with the SPLM and to encourage greater SPLM participation in the AEC process.

FERNANDEZ